

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): ~~A tensionless~~ leveller (1) intended for levelling a metal strip [[(5),]] ~~and~~ having an entry and an exit, comprising:

~~n+1 motorized rolls each having a constant radius R; (4,4'), of the type comprising two superposed cassettes (2, 3) each~~

~~a lower superposed cassette supporting at least n/2 of the rolls; and (4, 4') of constant radius R, an upper superposed cassette supporting at least n/2 of the rolls not supported by the lower superposed cassette; wherein~~

~~the rolls are offset with respect to one another and are placed alternately above and below [[the]] a path of the strip [[(5)]]],~~

~~[[the]] an axis of each of the rolls (4,4') of one of the lower or the upper cassette (2, 3) being separated from [[the]] an axis of [[the]] an immediately successive roll (4,4') of the other of the lower or the upper cassette by a centre-to-centre center-to-center spacing E_k, in which:~~

for k from 2 to 4, $R/E_k = R/E_1$;

for k from n-3 to n, $R/E_k = R/E_n$ and $R/E_n < R/E_1$; and

for k from 5 to n-1, $R/E_n \leq R/E_k \leq R/E_1$, and ~~R/E_k ≤ R/E_{k+1} R/E_k ≥ R/E_{k+1}~~

~~a center-to-center spacing between a first roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller and a second roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller being E₁, and~~

~~a center-to-center spacing between a last roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller and a next to last roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller being E_n~~

~~said leveller (1) optionally including means for adjusting the centre-to-centre spacings E_k.~~

2. (Currently Amended): Leveller (1) The leveller according to claim 1, in which $n \geq 8$.

3. (Currently Amended): Leveller (1) The leveller according to ~~either of claims 1 and 2, in which claim 1, wherein~~, when [[the]] a thickness of the strip [[(5)]] to be levelled is between 0.5 and 3 mm, $14 \leq n \leq 22$.

4. (Currently Amended): Leveller (1) The leveller according to ~~either of claims 1 and 2, in which claim 1, wherein~~, when [[the]] a thickness of the strip [[(5)]] is between 3 and 15 mm, $10 \leq n \leq 16$.

5. (Currently Amended): Leveller (1) The leveller according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4, in which claim 1, wherein:~~

for k from 1 to x , $0.90 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.95$; and

for k from $x+1$ to n , $0.70 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.80$.

6. (Currently Amended): Leveller (1) The leveller according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4, in which claim 1, wherein:~~

for k from 1 to x , $0.90 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.95$;

~~for one of the centre-to-centre center-to-center spacings E_x , where $5 \leq x \leq n-4$, being such that:~~ $0.80 \leq R/E_x \leq 0.90$; and

for k from $x+1$ to n , $0.70 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.80$.

7. (Currently Amended): Leveller (1) The leveller according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4, in which claim 1, wherein:~~

for k from 1 to x , $0.90 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.95$;

for one of the centre-to-centre center-to-center spacings E_x , where $5 \leq x \leq n-4$, being such that: $0.80 \leq R/E_x \leq 0.90$, and $0.75 \leq R/E_{x+1} \leq 0.85$; and for k from $x+2$ to n , $0.70 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.80$.

8. (Currently Amended): Method for A method of levelling a metal strip [[(5)]] in which a leveller [[(1)]] according to any one of claims 1 to 7 is used, ~~leveller in which the~~ wherein a degree of plastic deformation applied by the leveller is at least 60% and at most 90%.

9. (Currently Amended): Levelling The levelling method according to claim 8, ~~in which~~ wherein the metal strip [[(5)]] is a steel strip.